



## YASAI MAGIC

By  
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"Yasai" is a Japanese word meaning "vegetable." The Japanese have been, for many years, well known for their unusual vegetable creations for the table. It seems almost unbelievable that some of the most common vegetables can be converted into very attractive table decorations. However, the decorations described here are American adaptations, and not necessarily "authentic Japanese" creations.

"Yasai Magic" is the art of turning a humble turnip into a delicate camellia, a carrot into a bright chrysanthemum, or a long, slender, gracefully curved daikon into a demure bride. With a slight difference in the method of carving and with the use of food coloring, beautiful peonies can be made. With a little practice, other more intricate flowers, fowl, and animals can be made out of the eggplant, cucumber, beet, and other similar vegetables.

An arrangement of vegetable "flowers" may be used for any occasion. It will brighten a tray of food or give that final festive touch to a party table. These vegetable "flowers" may be made days ahead and placed in plastic containers or bags and kept in the refrigerator.

### Materials needed are:

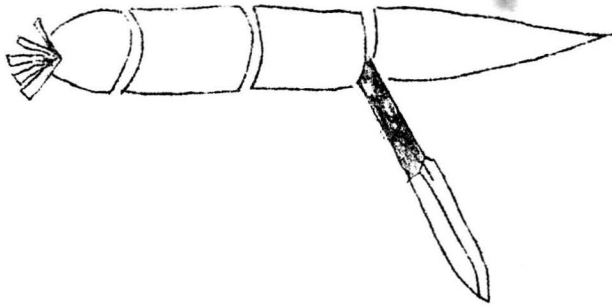
Vegetable peeler with one scalloped edge  
Very sharp French knife  
Toothpicks

Sukiyaki sticks  
Food coloring

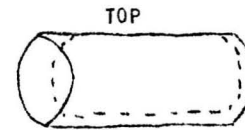
\*Both Mrs. Kaneo and Miss Masumoto are in North Hawaii County.

DAIKON CAMELLIAS -- Use medium-size daikons or Chinese-type turnips.

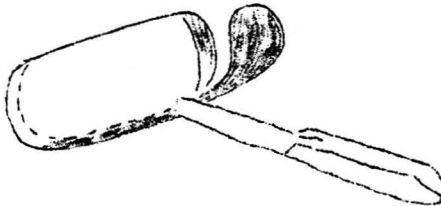
1. Cut into 3 inch sections; peel if desired.



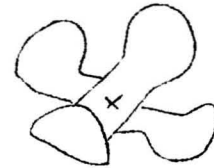
2. Round off ends and one side of each piece as shown by dotted lines.



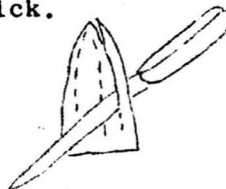
3. Cut thin slices from end to end forming two connected petals.



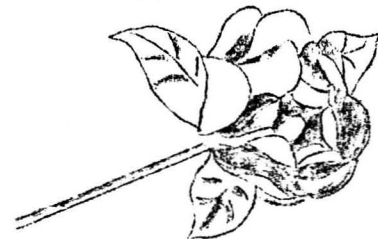
4. Assemble five or six slices, criss-crossing them as shown to make petals appear to go around. Stab a daikon stick through the center at x.



5. Make a rosette, like a radish rose, by cutting thin V-shaped slashes around a small piece of daikon as shown by dotted lines. Place it in the center of the flower on the end of the sukiyaki stick.

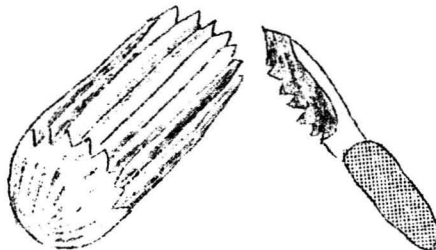


6. Place the flower in ice water. It will crisp and shape itself beautifully, like nature's own.

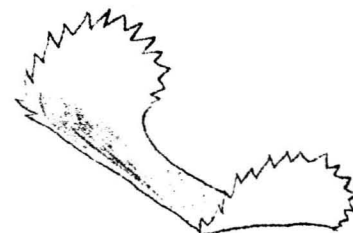


CARROT CHRYSANTHEMUM -- Use large-size carrots. They will be easier to work with if allowed to wilt a little by keeping them unrefrigerated for a day or two.

1. Cut carrot sections about 4 inches long and round off ends as for the camellia. Score one side with the scalloped vegetable peeler as shown.



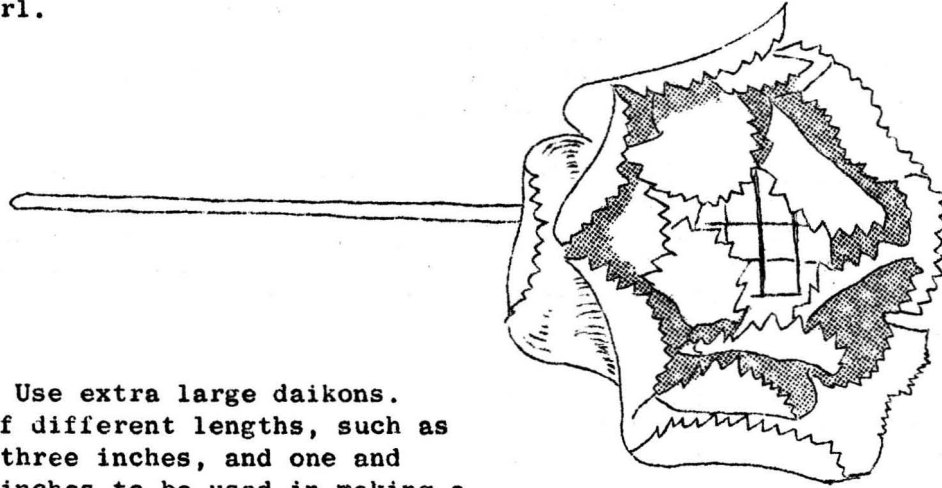
2. Slice and assemble petals the same as for the camellia.



3. For the center, cut a slice of the carrot about one-fourth inch thick; score it diagonally with a knife as shown. Place in center of flower.

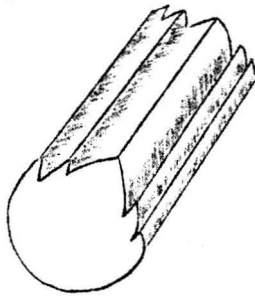


4. Place in ice water to crisp and curl.

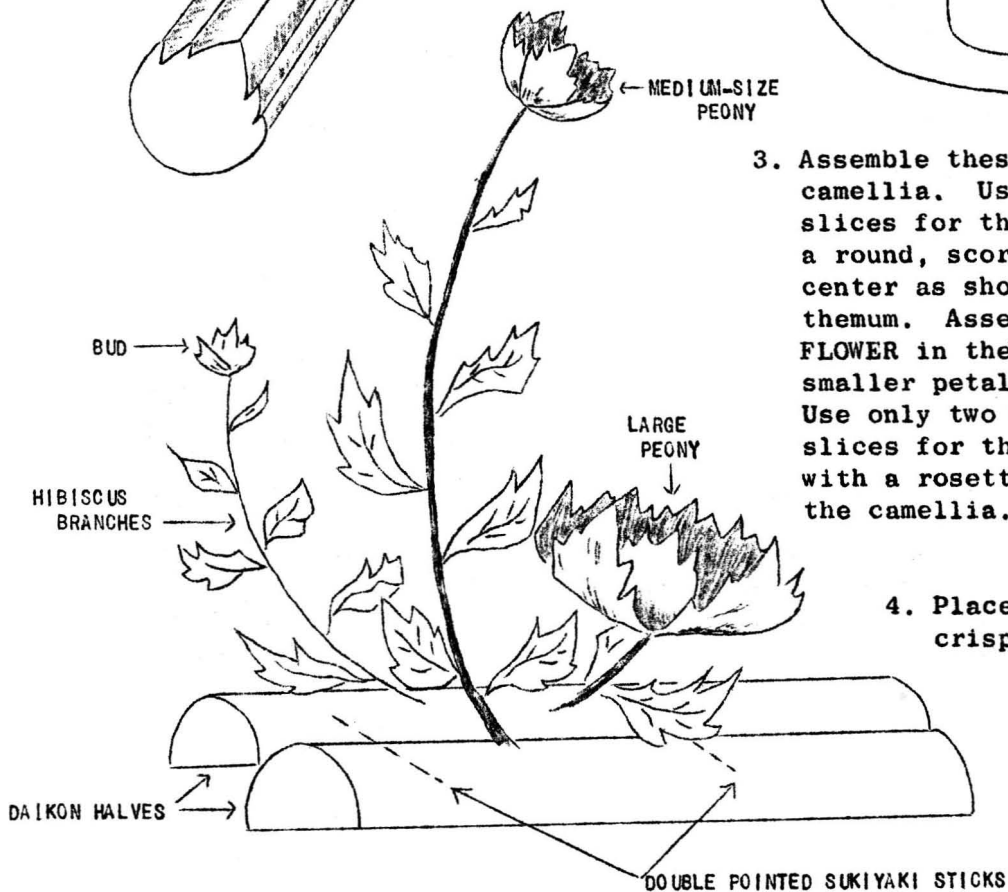
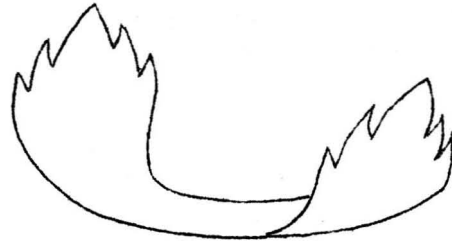


**PEONIES:** Use extra large daikons. Cut sections of different lengths, such as five inches, three inches, and one and three-fourths inches to be used in making a large flower, a medium-size one, and a bud. These three sizes of peonies are ordinarily used for Japanese arrangements.

1. Peel and round off sections as for camellia. Score with a knife as shown.



2. Slice petals as for the camellias.



3. Assemble these petals as for the camellia. Use 5 of the longest slices for the LARGE FLOWER. Use a round, scored slice for the center as shown for the chrysanthemum. Assemble the MEDIUM-SIZE FLOWER in the same way, using smaller petals towards the center. Use only two or three smaller slices for the BUD and center it with a rosette made as shown for the camellia.

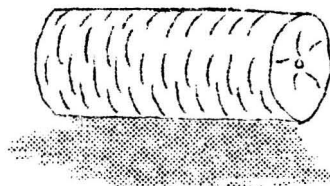
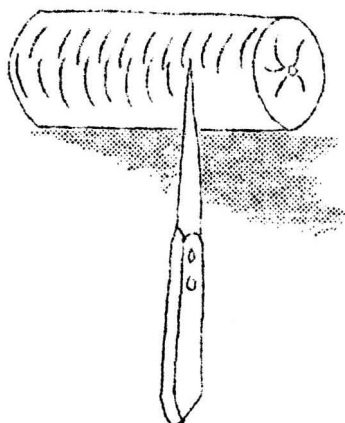
4. Place in ice water to crisp and curl.

5. To tint petals: Place a small amount of food coloring in a small dish. With a wide lettering brush dipped into the food coloring, lightly tint the edges of the petals. Let the color run, forming lighter veins as it travels downward on its own. Give a strong professional brush stroke from top to bottom and deepen the color toward the center, if desired.

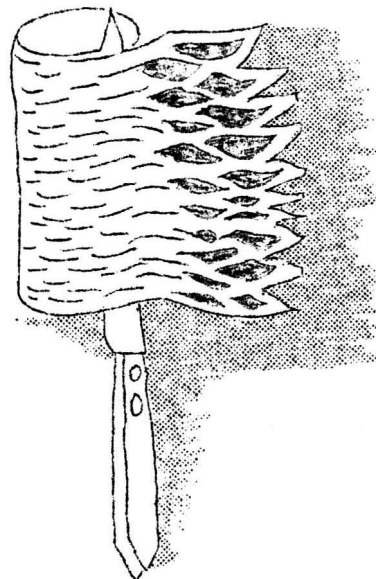
TO MAKE THE JAPANESE ARRANGEMENT: Select clean hibiscus branches, shaped with a slight curve as shown in the diagram on page 3. Make a base for the arrangement of two large daikon slices held together invisibly with double pointed suki-yaki sticks as shown. Attach the stick of each blossom to the hibiscus branches with corsage wire. Stab branches into base to make a graceful arrangement similar to that shown here.

FISH NET: It may be placed over a baked fish or crab, or used as a bridal veil for the daikon bride. First cut off both ends of carrot or daikon; pare until a smooth, even cylinder is obtained.

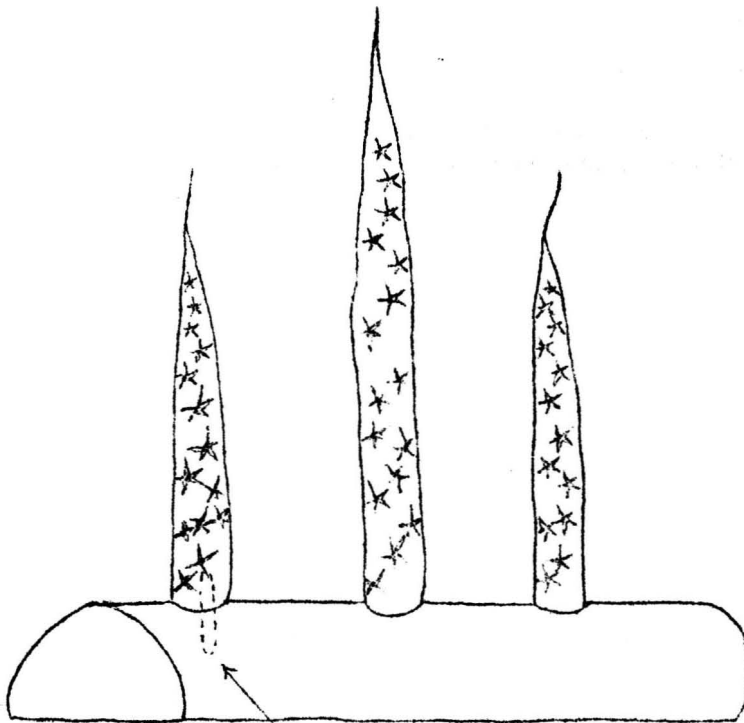
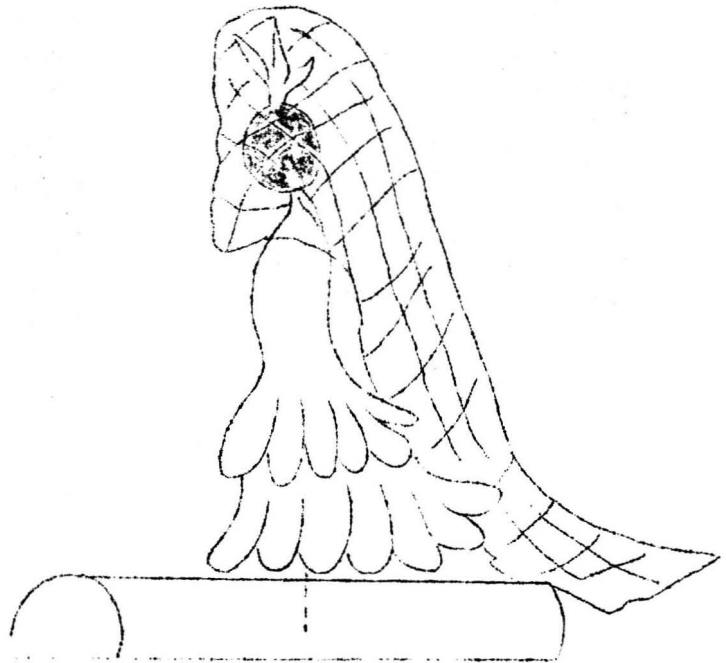
1. Starting at one end, make a straight row of one-inch slits, one eighth of an inch apart and about one-half inch deep. The second row of slits is made half way between those in first row and overlapping the slit length half-way.
2. Make the third row of slits the same as the first, and the fourth row, the same as the second. Continue around until the last row overlaps and fits between the first row of slits.



3. The net is now ready to be cut. Place the knife along-side the carrot or daikon and peel around very thinly to any desired length. Sprinkle lightly with salt, and let stand a few minutes to wilt. Wash off salt and spread the net.



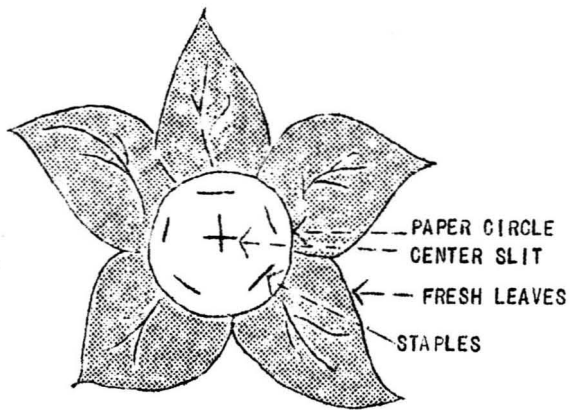
**DAIKON BRIDE:** Select a medium-size daikon with a slight outward curve for the bosom part. The length of the daikon determines the height of the bride. Peel the daikon to give it a clean look and round the top. For the skirt, cut thin slices upward around the daikon starting about two inches from the bottom and cutting almost to the waistline, being careful not to cut right through. Make another row of slices up from the bottom in the same way as for the rosette center of the camellia. With a toothpick invisibly fasten a radish at the top for the head. When crisped in ice water the petal-like skirt flares out attractively. Stand her on a large daikon half using a double pointed sukiyaki stick.



**DAIKON CANDLES:** Select long, slender tapering daikons. Use large daikon halves cut lengthwise for the "candlestick holder." Sharpen both ends of a short piece of sukiyaki stick and insert one end into the base of daikon "candle" and the other end into the daikon "holder." Fasten colored sequins or beads to the daikon candles with pins or sprinkle them with glitter. You can make your own glitter by crushing broken Christmas tree ornaments to a fine dust.

DOUBLE POINTED  
SUKIYAKI STICK

DAIKON HALF



When only vegetable flowers are used for a decoration, they will be more effective if framed with clean green leaves. Cut a  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 inch circle of heavy paper and make two one-fourth inch criss-crossed slits in the center. Staple several leaves onto the paper circle. Insert the sukiyaki stick with the flower on it through the center of the paper base. The little paper bases may be purchased ready-made from florist supply shops who sell them for camellia and gardenia corsages.

This circular was written at the request of the Agricultural Extension Service for our use.

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